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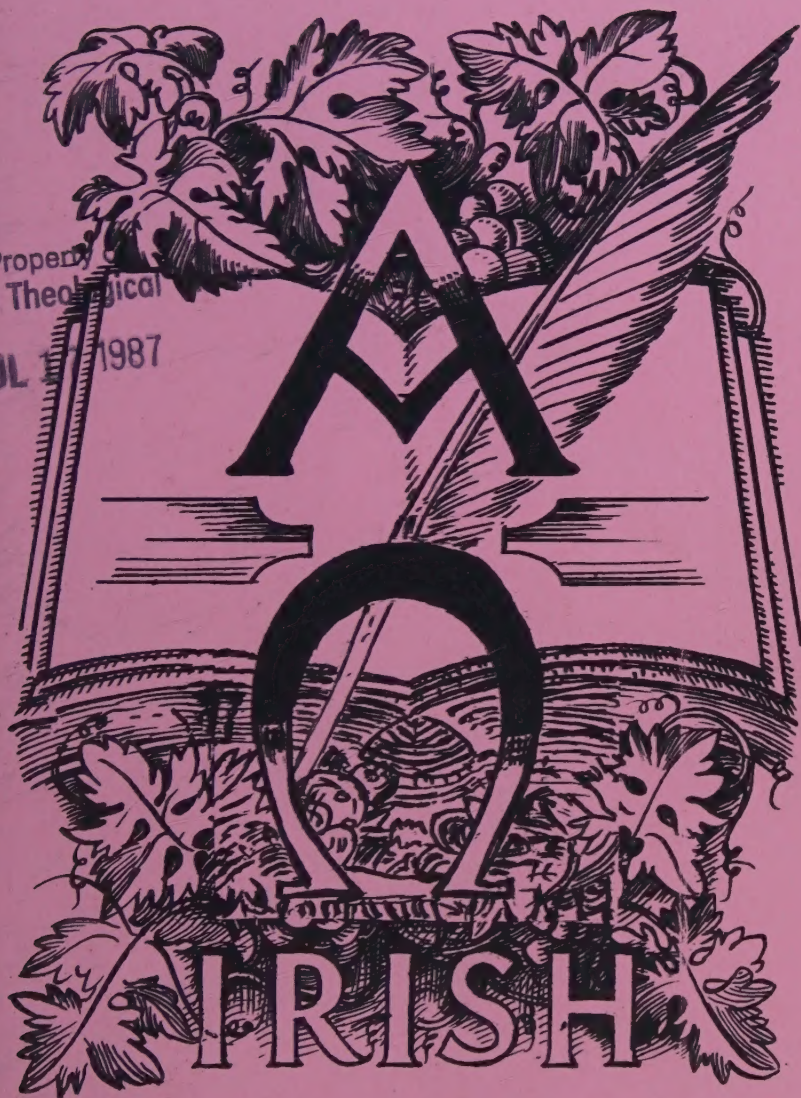
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# IRISH BIBLICAL STUDIES

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"My Kingdom is not of this world" ( John 18.36)

Conflict and Christian Existence in the world according to the Fourth Gospel

David Hill

We accept as fact that the NT evinces doctrinal pluralism. /1 If this is so for such fundamental issues as christology, it will be true, a fortiori, for the question of the Christian's attitude to the state and political involvement in general. What is implied in the Revelation of John does not accord easily, if at all, with what is written in Romans 13.1-7 and 1 Peter 2.13-17 and, so far, all our efforts to understand the circumstances in which these points of view emerged have done little to reduce the tension. In the history of Christian political thought, two Johannine statements on the lips of Jesus have loomed large: "My kingdom is not of this world" (18.36) and "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above" (19.11). It is to the understanding of these two texts that this study devotes itself.

In reply to Pilate's question whether he is "king of the Jews", Jesus answers in terms not of kingly title but of kingdom, "My kingdom (basileia) is not of this world" (18.36). Do we, with the grandsons of Jude, the "brother" of the Lord, interpret this in a "spiritualist" sense - that is, that Jesus' kingship is purely heavenly and has nothing to do with this world: "It is not worldly or on earth, but heavenly and angelic, and will be established at the end of the world" (Eus. Hist., 20, 4) Or do we, in the light of John 17.11, 16, accept Augustine's distinction between kingship that is in the world, but not of it: "His kingdom is here till the end of time....but it does belong here because it is only in the world as a pilgrim" (In joh. CXV 2; PL 35, 1939)

Again, a little later, in answer to Pilate's questioning, Jesus states, "You would have no power (or, authority exousia) over me unless it had been given you from above (another)" /2 Rudolph Bultmann /3 and Heinrich Schlier /4 find here the truth that all civil power ultimately derives from God and have built thereon a finished theory of the rights and duties of citizen and state. Others



Like H. von Camphausen /5 and Ernst Haenchen /6, believe that the text tells us little about the nature of the political order. Since both texts are set in John's account of Jesus' trial before Pilate, they first must be studied in that context.

The theme of "the Kingdom of God", so prominent in the Gospels, has, in John, all but given way to the theme of "Christ's kingship". Indeed, Christ's kingship - culminating in his exaltation or enthronement on the Cross - is the thread which binds together the entire Passion story. Jesus' trial before Pilate (18.28 - 19.16) is a carefully structured literary unity in which "kingship" links together several typically Johannine motifs. Most scholars divide this trial into seven scenes with two stage settings, the outside court of the Praetorium where "the Jews" are gathered, and the inside room of the praetorium where Jesus is held prisoner, with Pilate going back and forth from one to the other, thus giving "external expression to the struggle taking place within his soul, for the certainty of Jesus' innocence increases at the same rate as does the political pressure forcing him to condemn Jesus". /7 The diagram shows the carefully balanced chiasmic arrangement of the trial.

Scene 1 (18.28-32)  
Place Outside (praetorium)  
Characters Pilate and the Jews  
Time Jews ask for Jesus' death



Scene 2 (33-38a)  
Place Inside (praetorium)  
Characters Pilate and Jesus  
Time 1st interrogation (Jesus' kingship)



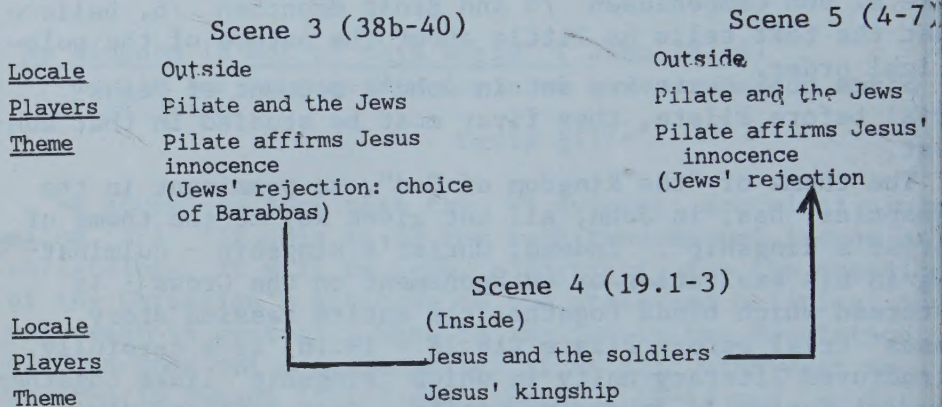
Scene 7 (12-16a)  
 Outside  
 Pilate and  
 Jews consent to Jesus' death



Scene 6 (8-11)  
 Inside  
 Pilate and Jesus  
 2nd interrogation (Pilate's power!)



==



This structure evidences three deeply theological interests.

1. The krisis or judgment of the world. The genesis of the drama lies not with Jesus and Pilate but with Jesus and the "Jews": they are the real contenders. Pilate is caught in the middle between clashing forces - Jesus (representing the world above) and "the Jews" (representing the world below). Despite his temporizing and indecision, he cannot escape coming down on one side or the other. Hence a key motif in the drama is "judgment" (krisis) - the encounter between Jesus and Pilate. And the ground for such encounter in John is always christological. Since Jesus is sent by the Father, his word encompasses the whole of our existence. Neutrality is impossible. To shut out Jesus' word of truth (truth incarnate) can only mean succumbing to the world's ways of acting and thinking. As Raymond Brown puts it, "Pilate, the would-be neutral man, is frustrated by the intensity of the participants. Having failed to listen to the truth and to decide in its favour, he and all who would imitate him inevitably finish in the service of the world." /8 In his presentation there is an instance of Johannine irony. On the surface Pilate is judge and Jesus is the accused. In reality, Jesus (Truth) is judge and accuser; Pilate and "the Jews" are the accused. Pilate rejects the truth and "the Jews" reject their Messiah. But, in the end, Jesus is triumphantly enthroned on the Cross as true king and Messiah, not only of the Jews but of the whole world.



a word, the krisis, the judgment, is a matter of recognizing Jesus' kingship.

The basileia or kingship of Jesus The centrality of "kingship" in this pericope is seen in the frequency with which Jesus is named "king (of the Jews)" (18.33,37,39; 19.3,12, 14,15). The Scenes 2 and 6 reflect on (a) the meaning and (b) the origin of kingship. Furthermore, in Scene 4 - the point on which the drama turns - we behold Jesus actually crowned as king (19.2,3) - Johannine irony again! We see, finally, the parallel unfolding (with its climax in Scene 7) of the two intertwined themes: Jesus' kingship and Jewish rejection of the claim. When we recall that the Johannine passion narrative is the story of Jesus' glorification, it is tempting to suggest that John has manoeuvred the encounter with Pilate in such a way as to culminate in a "royal epiphany" - "Behold your king!" /9

For John there is thus a very close tie between judgment and Jesus' kingship. When he is king, enthroned on a Cross, he will draw all people to himself (12.32; 3.14f.,8.28). As truth incarnate, no one can remain indifferent to him: depending on whether or not they give ear to his voice, people will decide one way or the other. Jesus' kingdom, though not of this "world" is nevertheless in it, for here is where the choice must and will be made.

Jesus' political inculpability The trial before Pilate also contains a two-fold apologetic interest. The charges against Jesus were not genuinely political: they were calumnies used to manipulate Pilate. John wants his reader to know (a) that Jesus was put to death not because he was a political revolutionary, but because, being sent by the Father, he witnessed to the truth that "the world" cannot bear; and (b) that the Roman empire consequently has no good ground for persecuting Christians. In the light of this we have reason to suspect that the texts, 18.36 and 19.11, do not directly address the question of the state's authority or of the Christian's political commitment. But do they perhaps do so indirectly?

### Basileia and Exousia

Jesus' kingship (Scene 2) Pilate means his question in political sense (ie "Are you the king of the Jews?"). A

simple denial will not suffice for the title has messianic (and therefore) political overtones of national liberation. Hence Jesus' three-stage answer is designed to disclose step by step the meaning of his basileia.

(a) Jesus' first answer (18.34) puts the dialogue on the proper footing. Taking the initiative, Jesus asks Pilate whether he is prepared to listen to the voice of truth or prefers to submit to rumour and manipulation. (The apologetic motif is also present: it is really "The Jews", "the world", that seeks Jesus' death.)

(b) Jesus' second answer (18.36) does imply that Jesus king, but it first excludes two misconceptions: (i) his kingdom does not belong to, is not modelled on the "world" as Lindars comments, "Jesus' kingdom is not a kingdom of the world of men apart from God, but a kingdom of men in relation to God": /10 and (ii) it must not be viewed as political and its power does not rest on armed strength or political manoeuvrings. By implication the "spiritualist" reading is also excluded: since Jesus is the light of the world made flesh, to deny that "judgment" occurs in this world would be to deny John's "realized eschatology". (John uses an above/below dialectic to express the same eschatological reserve that Paul conveys through the "already/not yet") Thus "world" often takes on a theological colouring: the "world" is the sphere of darkness that cannot be open to the light of truth, and so can only be opposed to God. Hence John's insistence that Jesus' presence affects the "judgment" of the world: "the world....hates me because of the evidence I bring against it" (7.7)

(c) Misunderstandings excluded, Jesus' third answer (18.37) redirects our attention from Jesus' kingdom to himself. "To be king" is "to bear witness to the truth." As Brown observes, "John has not portrayed Jesus as a preacher of the kingdom but as a unique revealer who alone can speak and show the truth about God. Jesus has no real subjects as would be true if his kingdom were like other kingdoms, rather he has followers who hear his voice as truth. Only those who belong to the truth can understand in what sense Jesus has a kingdom and is a king." /11 As the Father's unique revelation, Jesus is truth itself. Encounter with him leaves no room for neutrality, but makes clear whether



belongs to God (Truth) or to the "world" (Falsehood). Jesus' presence removes the self-deception and blindness of those who erroneously claim to belong to the light: unbelief. Jesus shows that such people in fact belong to the "world". Jesus, the criterion that tells whether we do or do not belong to God is no longer "religion", but "hearing the voice of Jesus," and the verb akouein, constructed with the genitive, refers to listening with understanding and acceptance. To summarize: Jesus' kingdom is not confined to man's inferior. Hence, to the extent that the Christian community (John's view) takes Jesus' word seriously, it may find itself in conflict with political powers, for Jesus' word discloses what may be false and sinful in the state: since the state disposes of coercive power, it may fail to use that power for love and service. Ultimately, the discordance of Christian existence derives from faith in and obedience to the truth revealed in Jesus. Is this conflict a matter of chance or necessity?

Pilate's "power" (Scene 6) Irked by Jesus' silence, Pilate asks 19.10= if Jesus is unaware of the power he has over him; Jesus replies that Pilate's power is nothing unless it comes from above (anōthen). Does "power" in vs11 mean the same as in vs10 and so imply that all political power and authority proceeds from God and therefore requires obedience from the governed? Or does "power" in vs11 merely refer to Pilate's concrete role (in judging Jesus) that Pilate must play in Jesus' economy? Bultmann contends that the exousia of vs11 is legitimated authority, power, right"; but von Campenhausen, on the other hand, insists that we may not assume the same meaning for exousia in both verses. The word exousia has two meanings: (i) being able to perform an action without external hindrances, and (ii) the right to do something or right over something, hence legal authority. The context of 19.11 indicates a meaning closer to (i): Jesus speaks not of power in general, but, concretely, of Pilate's power "over me". "What Pilate has", says Barrett "is potestas: it rests entirely with him to release or to execute Jesus". /12 Since the divine economy required that Jesus' "fitting up" be realized on the Cross, Pilate's concrete role was therefore necessary: cf. the die hypsothēnai of 19.14. Jesus would be saying that his suffering and death

can happen only because they fulfil the Father's will. Po  
"from above" (another) would therefore not refer to the  
Emperor, but to God. Lindars puts the matter well:

Jesus is willing to acknowledge that, if Pilate is t  
to his derived authority, and remembers its true  
source, he is not to be blamed for carrying out his  
duty, even though it will be the sentence of death.  
For even that is the fruit of the divine will. What  
is so serious and poignant is the fact the Jesus  
stands before Pilate as a result of man' unbelief, of  
their refusal to accept him as the one who came forth  
from God and was sent into the world by him. /13

Hence Jesus goes on to say (in 11b) that the Jewish  
authorities have "the greater sin": and sin, in John, is  
christological, the refusal to believe that God's salvific  
purpose is present in Jesus. "The implication seems to be  
that, since Pilate has been given a role in the passion by  
God, he is acting against Jesus unwittingly or unwillingly,  
but the one who handed Jesus over is acting deliberately.  
/14 whether that be a reference to Judas or, as is more  
likely, to the Jewish people.

Brown goes on to observe that Bultmann interprets the  
statement in vs 11 in terms of the State and the World: the  
State, represented by Pilate, may misuse, its power, but  
it does so without the personal hatred of truth that charac  
terizes the World. In putting Jesus to death the State  
(Pilate) is serving the World (the Jews) as it must do wh  
it does not decide against the World. In similar vein  
Schlier writes. "When political power acts against the tr  
it is always less guilty than the intellectual and spirit  
forces of the world" /15 It is probably true that thi  
kind of view, held by certain German writers, understanda  
reflects the theological agonizing about the role of the  
State prompted by the Nazi experience. But other scholar  
like Haenchen and von Campenhausen, have wisely asked if  
this is not a reinterpretation or re-application of John  
the light of a modern theological problem, rather than an  
exposition of the evangelist's own viewpoint. Of course  
struggle between Jesus and the Jewish authorities is a  
struggle between truth incarnate and the world, but the



introduction of the abstraction "the State" seems anachronistic.

### Conclusion

John 18.36 cannot be used to defend a spiritualized, disembodied mode of Christian existence. And 19.11 need not mean divine sanction of the State power. Christian existence is de facto (and is it also de iure?) a conflict because listening to Jesus' word of truth does provide the world's stimulus. To be more precise than that is difficult for John's interest is almost exclusively christological. And though John admits that Christian existence involves conflict - even with political powers - he provides no recipe for the "how" of this engagement. Nonetheless, the Christian cannot therefore be absolved from concrete political choices. This would be to succumb to the error of the "spiritualist" exegesis of these texts. John denies that Christianity is an alternative or parallel power to the state: but he does not deny that our actions as Christians will impinge on the political order.

Since the "world" - of John's day and of ours - is marked by murder and mendacity, true Christian principles in the spirit of Jesus will be quite other: willingness to die rather than escape at any price (12.24); service rather than dominion (13.13-17) or respectability (8.41); love for our fellows rather than egoism (13.34f); freedom of spirit to criticize the world despite its enmity - "the world...hates me because of the evidence I bring against it" (7.7) But let it be noted, such principles, with their potential for inspiring political options, remain quite general and do not furnish us with concrete blue-prints for political programmes.

### Notes

. Cf J.D.G. Dunn, Unity and Diversity in the NT (SCM, London, 1977) Even if some of his conservative critics claim that there is more unity and less diversity than Dunn postulates, there is agreement on his central thesis: the NT does not offer theological uniformity.

The logic the verse is difficult. Some have even arg-

ued that the clause "therefore he who delivered me to you has  
the greater sin" makes sense here only if Jesus is saying  
that Pilate has been given power over him by "the Jews" who  
in fact delivered him into Pilate's hands.

3. R. Bultmann, The Gospel of John: A commentary (ET, OUP, 1971), p513
4. H. Schlier, "Jesus und Pilatus nach der Johannes Evangelium in Die Zeit der Kirche (Freibourg: Herder, 1956) pp56-74. Cf also "The State according to the NT" in The Relevance of the NT (Herder and Herder, NYork, 1968), pp215-238
5. H. von Campenhausen, "Zum Verständnis von Joh", TLZ (1948) 387-392
6. E. Haenchen, "Jesus vor Pilatus (Joh, 18.28-19.15", TLZ (1960), 93-102; reprinted in Gott und Mensch (Tübingen: Mohr, 1965), pp144-56
7. R.E. Brown, The Gospel according to St John, Vol II (Anchor bible, Doubleday, NYork), p858
8. Brown, op.cit., p864
9. ibid, p884
10. B. Lindars, Commentary on John (New Century Bible, London, 1972), p559
11. Brown, op.cit. p869
12. C.K. Barrett, Commentary on John's Gospel (SPCK, London 1955), p451
13. Lindars, op.cit., p568-9
14. Brown, op.cit. p879
15. H. Schlier, "Jesus and Pilatus," p71



The Infancy Narratives with special reference to Matt.1

and 2

J. Cosslett Quin

Prepare yourselves for something very old fashioned. After all, I will be eighty in a few months and am daily increasing in deafness, Obstinacy and forgetfulness.

All the same, I have lately read Schillebeeckx's Jesus very learned, shows quite an incredible power of using technical jargon - I'd have found it more convincing if I'd known what his convictions were. Kung's Eternal Life on the other hand, I found clear and convincing; he does at least try, and I think succeeds, in establishing a minimum, though for me that minimum is too minimal. I also read most of, but couldn't get through Mackey's latest - a lot of vague smoky rhetoric from a formerly clear and acute writer. Forgive me for being so negative.

But I keep repeating to myself what F.D. Maurice said in 1848, "I do not wish to see the Catholic creeds levelled with the superstitions of the 19th century", and believe it still applies to the superstitions of 1986. During the last fifteen or twenty years, I have learnt Spanish and specially Modern Greek which brings the NT to life but is embarrassing in other ways; one realizes that Archimedes probably said βρέκη (vreeka); Xenophon's thousand certainly cried θάλασσα (thaaalassa, not thalassa) and that the Erasmian pronunciation is an absurd sort of ghost language that has no right to exist.

Also during a long and misspent life of trying to do three or more things at once, I have seen come and go a very large number of fashions of thought, and have realized that theological works are more ephemeral than novels, and that the more up-to-date you are today, the more certain you are to be out-of-date tomorrow!

When most modern theologians just dismiss the infancy narratives as myth or legend, one does not ask for reasons, one looks rather for motives. And these are mainly a priori, they come from a climate of thought which excludes anything supernatural or miraculous. Yet even Bultmann would allow that myths should not be eliminated but first illuminated by being translated into more scientific terms

- which for him seems to mean commonplaces and concepts acceptable to the not very high intelligence of the modern urban bourgeoisie, which is a rather extreme way of delimiting what God is allowed to say or do! Source, Form and Redaction critics and all that Fauna seem, in general, to behave as if they were dealing with files and cuttings from old newspapers. They do not seem to have any direct acquaintance with what happens with folklore and unwritten history in oral societies, such as one finds in Greece and Eastern Europe or among Gaelic speakers in Ireland or Scotland. As a result, they deal with decades as if they were dealing with centuries. Let me give you a few examples:

About forty years ago I wrote down in Irish in Tory Island a story of a smuggler pressganged into the English Navy during the Napoleonic wars. There was a touch or two of the uncanny but the details of clothing, rigging, etc. were absolutely accurate without a single anachronism. Even in English Professor Delargy in 1929 recorded from a Mrs O'Toole forty pages or so of very accurate and detailed reminiscences of her great or great-great grandfathers, that Billy Byrne of Ballymanas who was out in 1798 and whose statue stands, pike in hand, in Wicklow town. Now that gives periods twice as long as the interval between the birth of Christ (8BC or whatever it was) and the usual date estimated for the composition of Matthew or Luke! Further people who cannot read or write have tremendously accurate and compendious memories - I have taken down fifty or sixty songs or stories from old people, with material going back to the 18th or even 17th century and have known seanachies with still more inexhaustible stories of local history and legend. I also recall Sean O'Faolain's life of the Countess Markievitz or Eamon de Valera, in the preface of which he said that most of his sources were oral!

Now it is worth observing that in Mt dreams convey divine messages whereas in Lk, those messages are brought by messengers of God (a word for us technicalized into "angel" and that that again recalls two different strands in the Pentateuch sources. A day before he died, a very earthy old Cavan farmer said "I seen the beautifullest young person, I don't know was it a man or a woman, standing in that window beside the curtain, and then after that he spread a pair of wings". I've also known three people who've seen visions and all of them were very unimaginative



matter of fact, prosaic people. Imaginative people are much less apt to externalize or materialize their experiences... that is if we have the right to say they are entirely subjective.

Matt. 1 and 2, especially 2, have always struck me as a marvellous piece of symbolism, parable, midrash, Platonic myth, Heilsgeschichte, or whatever you like to call it, and full of theological and soteriological significance. I do not think that half enough study or attention has been devoted to the way in which the Biblical writers use narrative to convey religious truth in a way intelligible to learned and unlearned alike. Indeed only too often it is the overlearned and the gnostics who feel they know it all already who fail to understand what is grasped by babes.

When you try to extract dogmas from narratives, what was dynamic and concrete becomes static and abstract. Time, which gave life and movement is stopped and statement becomes dated and soon outdated. Such definitions nevertheless have a certain value when contemporary terminology is honestly used. Then comparison with scripture is possible. Whereas to use scriptural words is really a form of cheating since it fixes, probably wrongly, on only one of possible interpretations. Also, only too often, people forget, or ignore, St Thomas Aquinas' very sound principle, that theological arguments may be drawn only from the literal sense.

There is also the distinction between exegesis and hermeneutics. "He is not here, he is risen", spoken by the angel beside the tomb means the opposite hermeneutically! However, exegesis and hermeneutics pretty well coincide in the chapters we are considering.

(Forgive all these lengthy prolegomena.)

In Matthew 1 we have the curious paradox of one Virgin-born being provided with a genealogy, that of his legal father - or if Joseph and Mary were cousins, of his mother also. Still queerer are the four women who are singled out and named, two gentiles, one a temporary, the other a more permanent sacred whore, yet another an adulteress, the most respectable a dangerous young widow who traps the wealthy and worthy Boaz into marriage on the advice of her mother-in-law! He who is to come is to be accused and to plead guilty of the crime of which Mr. Stalker

was accused...and the accusation is damning to those who bring it!

In Mt the pregnancy and birth are a sort of official secret. After all, a person's legitimacy is taken for granted and not publicly discussed unless some doubt arises, and, since we are dealing with decades, not centuries, why should the story not have originated with Joseph? In Lk, on the other hand, the annunciation is more public as it were, and less compromising than the pregnancy. Earth and heaven wait in silence for one tense moment to hear Mary's decision, her fiat. Even God almighty has to get a woman on his side! Only after that can the Incarnation take place.

It has been suggested that these and other incidents are mere fiction, fabricated in order to "fulfil" the "prophecies" quoted here. That has led to the game of finding other such fulfilments like the young man fleeing naked in Mk which has been coupled with a phrase in Amos: like the other game of discovering quotations from early Christian liturgies. But the word "prophecy" frequently needs to be put within inverted commas. We forget that in those days there was no scripture except the OT, and no other source of scriptural proofs or of texts for sermons.

Now, of course, in general and in principle, the OT and the chosen People to whom it bears witness, at once prepare the way for, and are fulfilled, completed and corrected by Christ. But the alleged fulfilments are all very fragmentary and we have to deal with the details, each on its merits. And I must confess that all those quoted by Mt seem to me exceedingly farfetched.

Isaiah speaks of a young woman (almah ; ὤναυλις) who will have child which in three or four years will know what is eatable from what is uneatable and by that time the kings of Syria and Israel will be overthrown. The Septuagint uses the word παρθενοῦς: bethulah virgin and Mt takes it as an announcement of the birth of Jesus seven years later! The quotn in Jeremiah referring to the captivity in his own day is stuck on to the Slaughter of the Innocents. Hosea, referring to the Exodus, pictures Yahweh as saying "I called my Son out of Egypt" (ie Israel), a statement of a long past event and Mt attaches it to the return from the light into Egypt.

Now I put it to you that none of those phrases suggests



stant future events. They have been dragged in by the hair of the head and attached to actual events for the purpose of justifying these events in Jewish eyes. Now the odd thing is that Mt does not quote any of the traditionally accepted prophecies which fit the events so much better. Take the "tevangeliu" in Gen 3.15, especially now that the absurd "sa conteret" of the Vulgate has been dropped by Roman Catholic theologians. The "seed of the woman" does suggest a single physical parent and leads on to Dante's "La faccia tua a Cristo piu si somiglia" (Par. 32.36). "The face that most resembles that of Christ", which is justifiably topsy-turvy as sons are usually said to resemble mothers. (Has any other taken up that point?)

One can also find in Malachi 1.11 a reference to future present worship among the Gentiles and a whole lot of passages in the later chapters of Isaiah which express approval of one Zoroastrian, Cyrus, and of Zoroastrianism in general (after all it was the nearest thing to Hebrew prophetic religion in morality as well as monotheism or dualism) - and references to visitors and pilgrims from Eastern nations.

Considering that Tiridates sent some Magi on an embassy to Nero in Rome, there is no inherent improbability in our making the much shorter land journey to Jerusalem. Their astronomical or astrological calculations connected with the star they had seen in its rising (ἀνατολή can hardly mean the East or towards sunrise, seeing that the star must have been to the West of them). The Magi thus got a right answer by means of wrong methodology - a thing very probable and allowable in the eyes of pedantic schoolmasterish folk! But it is often the force rather than the content of faith which counts when people love God or are really seeking him - or, as I once heard C.S. Lewis say, "The Holy Spirit is very unscrupulous".

Natural religion, and their own specific one, could only give general indications. They were providentially led to where further information was available. "Salvation is of the Jews". They could go no further without guidance from Holy scripture, of which the chosen People are the guardians and keepers (which alas too often can mean gaolers and thieves!)

It seems a bit of overelaboration or unnecessary em-

broidery to say Herod gathered the Sanhedrin. But I suppose they could have been intimidated by one whom they regarded as a semi-pagan Edomite usurper. In any case, one scribe was enough and he gave them one verse from Micah and the Magi seized on the word Bethlehem, and acted upon it there and there and thus reached their goal!

It is not recorded that one scribe or priest ever even thought of walking, or riding his ass or mule, the seven or so short miles from Jerusalem to Bethlehem to see what, if anything, had happened. Not even the one who knew the OT heart and was able to quote the relevant passage! He with the rest treated the Word of God as in the alleged Cambrian toast, "Here's to high mathematics, and may it do no one any good". The idea of the star going before them and then stopping seems to me as impossible as it was unnecessary. But anyway they found the child and worshipped him which signifies bodily prostration, not excluding but implying the associated inward feeling of reverence, and they presented their gifts, products of their own country and departed, back to their own land of Persia or Iran, ignoring Herod's request or command to report back to him.

Herod (whom I always think of as resembling Henry VIII) was, like him, a bit of a theologian and, like him, took the Word of God more seriously than the religious leaders so as to do something about it and not ignore it. The slaughter of the innocents was just what might be expected from a man who murdered his own wife and son and gave orders for the execution of hundreds on his death bed.

The flight into Egypt and subsequent return and settlement at Nazareth are credible enough, though the word *Ναζωραῖος* is a misapplication of another quotation in relation to Samson, that highly unedifying bullyboy. It seems far-fetched to interpret as a Nazar circlet or diadem. "Said by the prophets" is not justified by its appearance in Judges or Leviticus and its reference to past, not future history. One may however observe one common feature in the highly disparate narratives of Mt and Lk, namely the reference to the birth at Bethlehem and the residence at Nazareth which according to Lk was Mary's home beforehand. John also refers to Nazareth. "The continual and at times very unusual mention of the mother and the equally continuous non-mention of the father of Jesus in the course of

the gospel narrative should also be noted as proving the early presence of particular attention having been given to the point". (Barth, Dogmatik 1/2 191)

Barth says the Church has put the doctrine of the Virgin birth like a sentry before the door to the mystery of Christmas and that preachers who do not believe it should at least respect it by silence. He also connects "natus e virgine" with the whole idea of revelation and grace, as against natural religion and the notion of Christ as a climax of human evolution.

The Magi, whose number is not specified, did not get any word from the Word Incarnate who had not yet spoken any word, nor are we told that they received any thanks or advice from Mary or Joseph. Yet they, like the Ethiopian Eunuch, went on their way rejoicing, and we hear nothing more of them after their exit from the stage. Any further addition would have been an anti-climax. They had met the climax, the central and determinative point and personality of their history and our history and all history: a thing as invisible and unverifiable as the immediate or remote result of an Infant Baptism. They accepted and were accepted. Herod attacked, the priests and scribes ignored and thus "forsook their own mercy" and determined their own destiny.

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Which Zachariah?

J.M. Ross

The purpose of this inquiry is to discover who was the Zachariah referred to in Matt.23. 34-36 and Luke 11.48-52.

These two passages, although differing in detail, are basically identical and must originate from a common source, probably the Lord Jesus himself, because the sayings are in his characteristic style and are not the kind of thing the early church would have invented: they are largely Jewish in conception and reproach the Jews for their misdeeds in the past, not for the sufferings of Christ.

Each of these passages is a combination of two sayings which may have been originally uttered independently but may have been conjoined by an editor, probably the compiler of Q; but to find out what Matthew and Luke at least thought to be their meaning, they have to be considered together. They cannot be interpreted at all points with certainty. but some inferences are more probable than others.

The first of these two sayings is a quotation from a Jewish source described by Luke as the Wisdom of God (which may be the title of a lost book, or may only mean "God in his wisdom has said"); this quotation states that God will send to his people various emissaries whom they will either kill or subject to various punishments. The emissaries are described in Matthew as prophets, wise men and scribes; in Luke as prophets and apostles. The second saying consists of a comment (apparently by Jesus himself) that this maltreatment of God's emissaries will be paid for by this generation, from which will be exacted according to Matthew all the righteous blood shed on earth from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zachariah, or, according to Luke the blood of all the prophets shed from the foundation of the world to the blood of Zachariah. Matthew identifies Zachariah as "the son of Barachiah"; both versions add that this Zachariah was killed between the temple and the altar.

Possibly both of these sayings originally described the maltreated emissaries simply as "prophets", not in the strict sense of divine spokesmen and writers of canonical books, but in a wider sense including Abel and all righteous persons martyred after the cessation of prophecy properly so called. This interpretation is made explicit in Matthew's version, which may well go back to the Jewish original and alludes in a very Jewish manner to three phases of Jewish history -- (a) the period of prophecy, ending with Malachi; (b) a subsequent period in which wise men wrote the Wisdom books such as Proverbs and Ecclesiastes; (3) a third period in which the scribes clarified and commented on the Law. Luke replaces this with a description of the martyred emissaries simply as "prophets and apostles", which looks like a modification introduced to make the saying applicable to the Christian Church. (The prophets here are not Christian prophets; had they been, they would have been placed after the apostles, as at 1 Cor. 12.28 and Eph.4.11)

We are now in a position to consider who this Zachariah was. Out of the numerous Zachariahs (it was a very common name) there are four candidates for our attention.

1. The first possibility is the prophet Zachariah son of Barachiah, author of the canonical book that bears his name. Matthew describes him as the son of Barachiah, from which it can be inferred that he identified the Zachariah of the dominical saying with the canonical prophet. He could have done this on the ground that the context requires a long succession of martyrs, and since these were all prophets, the final Zachariah must be looked for among the later prophets. But according to the context in Matthew the martyrs were not confined to prophets in the strict sense. It is therefore more likely that Matthew added "Son of Barachiah" to give more precision to the reference without asking himself whether the identification was correct. It is in fact unlikely that this was the Zachariah referred to by Jesus, for there is no tradition that Zachariah the prophet was put to death.

2. A second possibility is that the reference is to Zachariah, the son of Jehoiada, the priest, who, according to 2 Chronicles 4.21 stood above the people and threatened them with punishment from the Lord because they had forsaken him; consequently, by command of the king (Joash) he was stoned to death in the court of the temple. In favour of this identification is the close correspondence of the description of the place of Zachariah's death. It has often been argued that this Zachariah was selected as the last of the martyrs because in Jesus' time 2 Chronicles the last of the "Writings" (Part 3 of the scriptures) was the last book of the sacred scriptures, and the sequence "Abel to Zachariah" meant the sequence from one end of holy writ to the other. The case for this identification is argued in detail by Roger Beckwith on pp211-222 of his recent book "The OT Canon of the NT Church" (SPCK 1985). The argument is an integral part of his thesis that the tripartite Jewish canon of scripture was established before the Christian era but there are weighty reasons for doubting that the Zachariah in question is the son of Jehoiada.

(a) There is no solid evidence that the tripartite Jewish Canon was settled before the end of the first century AD. Beckwith admits as much at the top of page 212; his argument for an earlier date at page 222 rests on conjecture. In the New Testament the canonical scriptures are referred to simply as "the Law and the Prophets", except for Luke 24.44 which adds the Psalms, implying that these were the only inspired writings outside the Law and the Prophets; the Hagiographa (including Chronicles) were not yet sacred scripture. Nothing outside the law and the Prophets is quoted in the NT as sacred scripture except that at 1 Cor.3.19 a quotation from Job is introduced by the words "it is written". It is therefore unlikely that in Jesus' earthly lifetime, or even when Q was compiled, the expression "from Abel to Zachariah the son of Jehoiada" would be readily understood as referring to all the martyred prophets recorded in holy scripture.

(b) The context requires a reference to a long line of victims; Luke's version says that the blood of all the prophets would be required of this generation: to cut the



list short in the reign of Joash in the ninth century BC would be inappropriate. Nor was Zachariah the last prophet to be murdered: this was Uriah, the son of Shem-  
aiah, who was put to death under King Jehoiakim several centuries later (Jer.26.20-23).

(c) Matthew apparently did not think this Zachariah was the son of Jehoiada, for he calls him the son of Barachiah. Beckwith on pages 217-220 of his book gives examples of rabbinical homiletic identification of people bearing the same name, but it is doubtful if this practice goes back as early as the first century AD.

3. Josephus (Jewish War 4.5,4) mentions a Zachariah son of Bareis who was killed by Zealots within the temple in AD 70 shortly before its destruction by the Romans. But if this is Zachariah now in question, the saying cannot have been dominical but must have been constructed by the compiler of Q or of the Woes which form the basis of Matthew 23 and Luke 11, not long before the gospels of Matthew and Luke took their present shape. This seems highly unlikely.

4. The context requires a reference to the otherwise unknown Zachariah who had been put to death in the temple not long before Jesus' day. In view of the difficulties attending the other three identifications, this seems to stand as the most probable explanation.

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Dale C. Allison, Jr.

In his influential book, Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom, Jack Dean Kingsbury put forward two major theses concerning Matthew's use of the title, 'Son of God'. The first is that 'Son of God' is the most prominent and important christological title and that all the other titles are subordinate to it. The second is that the Christology of 'the first main part of the gospel', which Kingsbury takes to be 1.1-4;16, may be summarised in this fashion: 'Jesus, in the line of David (1.21), is the Son of God (2.15; 3.17), that is to say, he has his origin in God (1.20) and is the one chosen to shepherd the eschatological people of God (2.6) for, empowered by God for messianic ministry (3.16-17), he proves himself in confrontation with Satan to be perfectly obedient to the will of God (4.3-4, 5-7, 8-10) and, as such a one, he saves his (God's) people from their sins (1.21)'. This is, in Kingsbury's words, 'representative of the way in which Matthew would have us define the predication Son of God'.

While Kingsbury's original contribution has met with a friendly reception in many quarters, it has not escaped criticism. Most prominently, David Hill, in three different articles, has taken issue with Kingsbury's method and disputed several of his central assertions.<sup>2</sup> Hill has made the following points, among others.

(1) Kingsbury never provides a rationale for one of his methodological presuppositions, namely, the assumption that a single christological title must be understood as 'foremost' or 'pre-eminent'. Even when one grants the prominence of 'Son of God' in the First Gospel, and even when one grants that 'Son of God' gives us, so to speak, God's own view of things, what is the good reason for subsuming all the other titles under this one title? In Kingsbury's estimation, 'Son of man', 'Lord', 'Messiah', 'Son of David', and the other christological appellations serve largely to give content to the one truly adequate appellation, 'Son of God'. But the justification for this approach, which has no explicit textual support, is far from evident.

(2) A second criticism made by Hill is that Kingsbury has not done justice to Matthew's identification of Jesus with the Servant of Deutero-Isaiah. Appealing to texts such as 3.17; 8.17; 12.18; and 17.5, as well as to the work of B. Gerhardsson<sup>3</sup>, Hill contends that the title, 'Servant', and its associated themes do more than just enrich Matthew's portrait of Jesus as the Son of God. Kingsbury's concentration on one title has led him to underestimate the importance of another title.

(3) The approach to Christology through titles may not be adequate. Hill writes: 'Because he (Matthew) portrays Jesus by means of a story no one category-teacher, healer, Wisdom incarnate, triumphant Son of man, not even Kyrios or Son of God - is adequate to contain that Jesus revered by the Church, the Jesus on whom Matthew then reflects in his book'.<sup>4</sup> In other words, 'Christology is in the whole story'. This is, admittedly, a point Kingsbury anticipated: 'In principle, I concur with the oft-repeated assertion that the question of christology is larger than the analysis of titles of majesty'.<sup>5</sup> In practice, however, Kingsbury does tend to construe the narrative so that instead of serving to reveal Jesus it rather serves to define a title.

Although Hill's criticisms have called forth more than one rejoinder from Kingsbury<sup>6</sup>, in my opinion the critique stands. Hence I am inclined to agree that the quest to find Matthew's pre-eminent christological title is not as helpful as Kingsbury seems to suppose. I also find the attempt to subsume all the christological titles under the one title, 'Son of God', to be misconceived. But it is not the purpose of this essay to enter further the interesting debate between Kingsbury and Hill. I desire instead to raise some questions about Kingsbury's proposed definition of 'Son of God' (see above).

The first difficulty one has is this: Kingsbury confines himself to the text of Matthew. In discussing 'Son of God' he never asks what the title meant in ancient Judaism, in early Christianity, in the Gospel of Mark, or in the Hellenistic world in general. He simply looks at Matthew. This determination to stick to the text alone



proclaims: 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'. These words probably show the influence of both Ps. 2.7 and Isa 42.1, in which case Jesus is here both the Son of God and the Servant. But is there not more? Is Jesus not also here identified in some sense with Israel? Apart from the fact that Jewish texts sometimes apply both appellations, 'Son of God', and 'Servant', to Israel<sup>9</sup>, the wider context encourages such a suggestion. This is because the story of the baptism is preceded and followed<sup>10</sup> by passages in which Jesus is the counterpart of Moses and because 3.13-17 introduces the temptation narrative, in which Jesus the Son repeats the experience of Israel in her desert wanderings (see below). All this suggests new exodus. Indeed, and as I have argued elsewhere, Mt 1-5 in all its parts may well display a developed exodus typology.<sup>11</sup> The gospel opens with events which recall the birth and childhood of Moses. Then there is the baptism, which parallels Israel's passing through the waters. There follows next the temptation, in which Jesus re-experiences the desert temptations of Deuteronomy. Lastly, there is 5:1-2. where Jesus, like Moses, goes up on a mountain and then delivers words of Torah. So seemingly every major event in Mt 1-5 has its complement in the story of Israel's exodus from Egypt. If so, it follows that when Jesus emerges from the waters and is called God's Son, the interpreter is bound to detect what is also present in 2.15, namely, the typological identification of Jesus with Israel.<sup>12</sup>

(3) The temptation (4:1-11). In response to the devil's three temptations, Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy, from Deut 8.3 in 4.4, from Deut 6.16 in 4.7, and from Deut 6.13 in 4.10. This is the key to the narrative. Whether, as Gerhardsson has argued,<sup>13</sup> the text arose out of reflection upon Deut 6-8, clearly Jesus is here replaying the experiences of Israel in the desert. Having emerged from the waters of a new exodus at his baptism Jesus next enters the wilderness to suffer a time of testing, his forty days of fasting being analogous to Israel's forty years of wandering. Like Israel, Jesus

is tempted by hunger. And, like Israel, Jesus is tempted to idolatry. Especially instructive for understanding our story is Deut 8:2-3: 'And you shall remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments, or not. And he humbled you and let you hunger, and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know; that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but that man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord'.

In tempting Jesus, the devil twice addresses him with these words: 'If you are the Son of God....' The immediate reference is to the voice at the baptism. At the same time, 'Son of God' is appropriate because it is the title Jesus shares with Israel (Exod 4:22-23; Deut 1:31; 32:5-6; 18-20; Hos 11.1). Note especially Deut 8,5: "Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the Lord your God disciplines you (Israel)". In Mt 4:1-11, Jesus is tempted as the Son because he is re-enacting the experience of Israel, God's son, after the exodus.

To conclude: in Mt 1:1-4,16 Jesus the Son of God is the embodiment of true Israel. He not only fulfils Israel's history but recapitulates it. In being called out of Egypt, in passing through the waters of baptism, and in suffering temptation in the wilderness, Jesus the Son of God is Israel personified. This entails that in at least one respect Kingsbury's definition of 'Son of God' is inadequate. It should be modified so as to reflect the identification of Jesus with Israel, which is one of the leading themes of Mt 1-4.

One final point. Perhaps I have not yet caught on to what some of the modern literary critics are up to. Nevertheless, Kingsbury's failure to observe the typological dimension of Matthew's Son of God Christology is, so it seems to me, due to his dogged insistence upon looking solely at the text of Matthew. If he had instead

is perhaps understandable. In any event it accords with some recent trends in Biblical studies, especially in the United States. Influenced by certain movements in modern literary criticism, many exegetes now focus almost wholly on the text as it stands, by-passing the traditional problems of source-criticism, tradition-criticism, and redaction-criticism. Now without being so bold as to deny the legitimacy of this new enterprise (which I may not really understand), I do wonder whether it does not sometimes make for impoverished interpretation. Surely those who read or heard Matthew's text for the first time had, on some previous occasion, run across the words, 'Son of God'. Our evangelist did not invent them. And just as surely, previous acquaintance with the term would inevitably have coloured understanding of it. Thus, if the narrative gives content to the title, it is no less true that the title gives content to the narrative. This is why it seems to me a bit odd when one confines oneself to the text as whole-heartedly as does Kingsbury. Matthew's gospel has a background. Should we not be eager to explore it? After all, the First Gospel comes to us from a very different time and a very different place, and if we are not to follow the deconstructionists and like-minded others who bid us to give up altogether the pursuit of authorial intention, must we not seek to understand how Matthew's words and phrases were used in other first-century texts? My point comes down to this. In the study of Matthew's christological titles, it is important to know how those titles were used in Matthew's world. This is a subject which Kingsbury has, to all appearances, failed to broach. That it is an important subject is made clear by the next observation I wish to make.

Perhaps the major problem with Kingsbury's definition of 'Son of God' is its failure to take into account a very important theme that runs throughout Mt 1-4. According to Kingsbury, and as already noted, in 1.1-4;16 'Son of God' means that Jesus has his origin with God, is the one chosen to shepherd the eschatological people of God, is empowered by God for messianic ministry, is perfectly



obedient to the will of God in confrontation with Satan, and is he who saves his people from their sins. What this definition leaves altogether out of account is the narrative's typological equation of the Son of God with Israel. Let us look at the texts.

(1) The second formula quotation (2.15). After the wise men leave Bethlehem, an angel appears to Josphe and commands him to take 'the child and his mother' to Egypt. The evangelist then informs us that Joseph obeyed, and further that 'this was to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called my son". The application to Jesus of this Scripture, Hos 11.1, strikes most modern readers as gratuitous. In its original context, the OT verse unambiguously refers to Israel: 'When Israel was a child I loved him, and out of Egypt have I called my son'. Did Matthew not know this? Did he not realise that Hos 11. was not a messianic prophecy but a proclamation of the Exodus? Before dismissing our author as a third-rate exegete, one should consider this:<sup>7</sup> while Hosea was much mined for early Christian testimonia, Matthew was evidently the first to connect Hos 11.1 with the story of Jesus.<sup>8</sup> This implies that he knew the verse in its OT context and was therefore not naively oblivious of the change of reference when he applied the verse to Jesus, not to the nation. What then was he thinking? Almost certainly he took himself to be following the Christian tradition according to which Jesus repeated or recapitulated in his own person certain experiences of Israel. The idea is fundamental to Q's temptation story (Mt 4:1-11 = Luke 4:1-13) and is common enough in primitive Christianity. It may even have roots in Jesus' own ministry, if there is any truth to T.W. Manson's collective interpretation of the Son of man. In any case, the use of Hos 11.1 in Mt 2.15 presupposes the typological equation of Jesus the Son of God with God's son Israel. It is as the Son that Jesus takes up the role of the people of God.

(2) The voice at the baptism (3.17). When the baptised Jesus climbs the banks of the Jordan a voice from heaven

explored the OT background of certain verses and considered the Jewish texts in which Israel is God's 'son', he might have offered a different definition of 'Son of God'. The lesson would therefore seem to be that one must look not only at texts but through them, to the world from which they emerged.

Notes:

1. J.D. Kingsbury, Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom (Philadelphia 1975) 52.
2. D. Hill, 'Son and Servant: An Essay on Matthean Christology', JSNT 6 (1980) 2-16; idem, 'The Figure of Jesus in Matthew's Story: A Response to Professor Kingsbury's Literary-Critical Probe', JSNT (1984) 37-52; idem, 'In Quest of Matthean Christology', IBS 9 (1986) 135-142.
3. B. Gerhardsson, 'Gottes Sohn als Diener Gottes: Messias, Agape und Himmelsherrschaft nach dem Matthäusevangelium', ST 27 (1973) 73-106; idem, 'Jesus livré et abandonné d'après la passion selon Saint Matthieu', RB 76 (1969) 2066-277; idem, 'Sacrificial Service and Atonement in the Gospel of Matthew', in Reconciliation and Hope, ed. R. Banks (London, 1974) 25-35; idem, The Mighty Acts of Jesus according to Matthew (Lund 1979).
4. 'In Quest of Matthean Christology', 140.
5. J.D. Kingsbury, 'The Figure of Jesus in Matthew's Story: A Literary-Critical Probe' JSNT (1984) 4.
6. In addition to the article cited in n.5 see J.D. Kingsbury, 'The Figure of Jesus in Matthew's Story: A Rejoinder to David Hill', JSNT 25(1985) 61-81.
7. Cf. C.H. Dodd, According to the Scriptures (London 1952) 75-78.

Notes (contd)

8. R.E. Brown, The Birth of the Messiah (New York 1977) 219[221].
9. E.g. Exod 4.22-23; Deut 1.31; 8.5; 32.5-6; 18-20; Isa. 41.8; 44.1-2; 21; 48.20; 49.3; Jer 30.10 MT., Hos 11.1; Bar 3.36.
10. For the material in Mt 1-2 see W.D. Davies and D.C. Allison, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew, ICC (Edinburgh forthcoming) vol. 1, Excursus 1. On 5.1-2 see next note.
11. D.C. Allison, 'Jesus and Moses (Mt 5.1-2)', ExpT (forthcoming).
12. For further discussion see W.D. Davies, The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount (Cambridge 1966) 26-45.
13. B. Gerhardsson, The Testing of God's Son (Mt 4.1-11) Early Christian Midrash (Lund, 1966).



T.E. McComiskey, The Covenants of Promise: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants, Nottingham: IVP, 1986, pp. 259; first published in 1985 by Baker Book House, Grand Rapids.

In this study McComiskey explores the relationship between the various covenants found throughout the Bible. To understand the role of the different covenants in redemption history, he suggests that it is necessary to distinguish two types of covenant: promissory and administrative. Promissory covenants constitute a divine promise which will be fulfilled regardless of human obedience. These covenants are unconditional and eternal in nature. Within this category McComiskey places the Abrahamic (Genesis ch. 15) and Davidic (2 Samuel ch. 7) covenants. Administrative covenants, in contrast, are conditional upon an obedient response from the human parties involved and are applicable only to a fixed period of time. The covenant of circumcision, the Mosaic covenant and the new covenant all fall under this classification.

The supreme importance of the Abrahamic promissory covenant is emphasized by McComiskey. He sees the outworking of the different promises made by God to Abraham (cf. Gen. 12:1-3) as the unifying feature of the two testaments. Indeed God's activity in the world today relates directly to the fulfilment of these promises. These promises underlie the covenant made with Abraham in Genesis chapter 15, and they were later restated in the covenant made with David (2 Sam. ch. 7). These promissory covenants need to be clearly distinguished from the administrative covenants.

Although McComiskey presents a compelling case for the importance of the promises made to Abraham in the outworking of redemption history, one must question the validity of the distinction which he makes between promissory and administrative covenants. Here consideration must be given to the way in which McComiskey

separates the Abrahamic covenant of Genesis ch. 15 from the covenant of circumcision in Genesis ch. 17. The former is a promissory covenant, the latter an administrative covenant. In distinguishing between the covenants mentioned in these two chapters, McComiskey restricts the designation 'Abrahamic covenant' to chapter 15. Yet the covenant in chapter 17 is no less 'Abrahamic'. McComiskey fails to demonstrate that when later biblical writers refer to the covenant with Abraham they have in view only chapter 15. To the contrary, the 'Abrahamic covenant' embraces both chapters 15 and 17.

Furthermore, his interpretation of chapter 17 is problematic. Although he notes that the covenant of circumcision in chapter 17 is closely linked to the promissory covenant of chapter 15, McComiskey argues that it is nevertheless quite distinct. He proposes that Gen. 17:2-8 is a restatement of the promissory covenant. Only 17:10-14 does God introduce the covenant of circumcision. Since Abraham is under a strict obligation to circumcise himself and the male members of his household, this cannot be part of a promissory covenant, which by definition involves no obligations. Thus a new covenant is introduced in 17:10. This analysis of the passage, however, is highly questionable. Chapter 17 does not focus on two covenants, but one. Moreover, McComiskey fails to account adequately for the imperatives found in 17:1. These clearly introduce obligations which Abraham must fulfil prior to the establishment of the covenant. As the present reviewer has argued in detail elsewhere ('Genesis and the Covenant of Circumcision', *JSOT*, 25 (1983), pp. 17-22) chapter 17 is merely the promise of the covenant being established, its ratification comes later in 17:16-18. In Genesis the details of the Abrahamic covenant are not restricted to one chapter, but come rather in chapters 15, 17 and 22 (cf. James 2:21-24). The Abrahamic covenant is both promissory and conditional. It is guaranteed by divine promise (ch. 15), but also requires the fulfilment of various obligations by Abraham (chs. 17 and 22; cf. 26:2-5). Both of these aspects are an integral

part of the Abrahamic covenant. To separate them creates a distorted view of the actual structure and content of the covenant established with Abraham.

Although McComiskey's interpretation of the biblical material concerning the Abrahamic covenant is less than satisfactory, other aspects of his book deserve further consideration. His discussion of the way in which the divine promises to Abraham link together the different covenants is certainly very helpful. There is much here that will stimulate further discussion on the biblical covenants and their relationship to one another.

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T.D. Alexander

Donald E. Gowan, Eschatology in the Old Testament, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986, pp.ix, 150.

This book is offered as a 'comprehensive introduction to eschatology in the OT'. It is not a study of the eschatological teaching of individual authors, but rather 'history of eschatological traditions'. Gowan defines these traditions as 'those promises that speak of a future with significant discontinuities from the present' (p. 1). The hopes which these promises convey will never be obtained through mere human progress. Rather they anticipate a future which will be achieved only through special divine activity.

Gowan's approach is influenced by two important observations. Firstly, he notes the centrality of Jerusalem (or Zion) in Old Testament eschatology. This is particularly evident in the literature of the Judean prophets of the eighth century and onwards. Chapter 1 traces the early history of the Zion tradition and then examines its development as the central element in Old Testament eschatology.



Secondly, Gowan notes three important transformations which will occur in the future (cf. Ezekiel 36:22-38): God will renew (a) the human person, (b) human society, and (c) nature. For Gowan these themes are an integral part of Old Testament eschatology. Thus Chapter Two examines the transformation of human society under the heading 'Peace in the World'. Here Gowan focuses on three issues: restoration to the promised land; the messiah; the nations. Chapter Three deals with the transformation of the human person ('The People of Zion'). Here attention is given to the forgiveness of sin, the gift of a new heart and spirit, and the establishment of a new covenant. Chapter Four examines the eschatological hopes which the Old Testament writers express regarding the creation of a new heaven and a new earth.

In each section Gowan adopts a similar style of approach. He begins with the pre-eschatological form of the tradition, next he traces its development as an eschatological hope, and finally he outlines the way in which the tradition has been understood in later Jewish and Christian writings. An interesting aspect of Gowan's study is his willingness to comment on the contemporary relevance of Old Testament eschatology.

Gowan's study is certain to prove a most useful introduction to Old Testament eschatology. His discussion is clear and lucid, and his organisation of the material highlights well the main themes underlying the eschatological hopes of the Old Testament writers.

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T.D. Alexander

John Stott: The Cross of Christ, Inter-Varsity Press,  
Leicester, 1986; 383pp.

This book of thirteen chapters plus preface and conclusion is well supplemented by an extensive Bibliography and indices of authors, Biblical references and subjects, and footnotes throughout. The Biblical text used is the New International Version.

Since the literary style is non-technical and Greek words are given in English transliteration, this book will appeal to a wide range of readers. It is full of seed thoughts for sermons so that ministers in particular will find it of value. However, the book is not light reading and will make demands on any readers, though any who read it will find it enriching.

The main part of the book consists of four sections on Approaching the Cross, The Heart of the Cross, the Achievement of the Cross and Living Under the Cross. The first establishes the centrality of the cross in the New Testament writings and church history. Beginning with the essential background of human sin and divine holiness and wrath, the second section explains the cross in terms of forgiveness, satisfaction and substitution. In the third Stott explains the achievement in terms of the salvation of sinners using four images namely, propitiation, redemption, justification and reconciliation, the revelation of divine love and justice, and Christ's victory over the devil and evil. Especially challenging is the final section on the implications of the cross for daily life and includes evangelism, loving philanthropy and concern for justice, and offers guidelines for ethical issues such as evil and violence, state authority and suffering, including Auschwitz and Hiroshima.

In developing his thesis the author provides a stimulating interaction with many important theological issues, both ancient and modern, and ably justifies his stance. These range from divine impassibility and ransom theories to participation in Christ's self-offering and an evaluation of current ecumenical convergence.

The preface sets out the author's parameters. He confines himself to developing his theme within the triangle of Scripture, tradition and the modern world. His thesis is that the evangelical faith and the historic biblical faith are essentially the same in that both share the centrality of the cross, and the biblical doctrine of the cross is substitutionary from beginning to end, and the cross transforms everything. The conclusion is an exposition of seven statements about the cross found in Galatians.

This book is certain to become a classic. It combines skill in communication with mastery of the subject. Its author is obviously an able pastor-teacher for it not only informs the reader, it also draws the reader into a fresh devotional appreciation of the central fact of the Christian faith, Christ's death on the Cross, and calls the reader to a renewed commitment to live in the service of Christ crucified. This book is a must for every student of the word.

Wald E. Gerbrandt, Kingship according to the Deuteronomistic History. Scholars Press 1986. Pp. xv, 229 \$17.95  
pb \$12.95

In an introductory section the author reviews research on the deuteronomistic history in general and the deuteronomistic view of kingship in particular. In laying the basis for his own study, he argues that while one may think in terms of a pre-exilic deuteronomistic history which was subsequently expanded, there is little ideological change involved in the second edition involved merely the bringing up to date of the first. There is sufficient unity of language and thought within the history to justify our referring to it as "deuteronomist". The unity of outlook extends also to the view of kingship, though the latter is not to be determined by reference in the first instance to 1 Sam. 7-12. These chapters, recording the foundation of the monarchy, have been subject to numerous studies, without any consensus on literary critical results or their overall value having been achieved. Arguing that the problematic 1 Sam. 7-12 are best approached after the attitude of the deuteronomist towards kingship has been determined from other, more readily accessible, parts of the deuteronomistic history, the author turns in his second section to 2 Kings 18-23. A useful account of the history of research into 2 Kings 18-23 is provided in an appendix, while in his own contribution the author approaches the account of Hezekiah and Josiah as deuteronomistic compositions, based on older traditions, in which these kings are presented as having fulfilled their responsibility to trust in Yahweh as deliverer and to listen to his word spoken through his prophet (Hezekiah) to establish the law of Moses in the land (Josiah). Kingship is of paramount importance for the deuteronomist not in itself but because of its role in promoting the welfare of the people of Yahweh. Rejecting Cross's analysis as inadequate insofar as his two themes play no role in most of the deuteronomistic history, Gerbrandt argues that the history in general is concerned with the issue of Israel's position in the land as dependent on her observing the



covenant law of Yahweh. Within that general context the deuteronomist's view of kingship is to be understood: by functioning as a covenant administrator the king should ensure Israel's prosperity in the land through obedience to the law of Yahweh.

In the third and final section the author argues that this understanding of the deuteronomist's view of kingship is also found in the rest of the deuteronomistic history. The law of the king in Deut. 17 is not anti-kingship, but, in its deuteronomistic form, envisages the king's reading of the law as necessary to equip him to act as covenant administrator. Joshua is a royal figure in the deuteronomistic presentation, which also portrays him as responsible for Israel's observance of the covenant. The necessity of kingship within the framework of covenant obedience to Yahweh is presupposed in Judges, and it is this form of kingship which is advocated in 1 Sam. 8-12. These chapters function both to point the dangers of kingship and to integrate it into Israelite theology. In 2 Sam. 7 the covenant with David does not replace the Mosaic covenant but continues and specifies it. In general the deuteronomistic history presents David as the recipient of divine promise and as a model of someone who, in obeying the covenant law, did what was right in the eyes of Yahweh. This understanding of kingship lies behind the presentation of individual kings in Kings, especially Solomon, Jeroboam and Joash.

This is a useful study which makes a clear and well argued case. It suffers less than might be expected from the fact that it is virtually unchanged in its dissertation form, submitted in 1979, although its presentation of the history of research would have profited from the later work of Weiser, while its overall approach would have been strengthened by the work of Hoffmann. Although the author allows for two editions of the deuteronomistic history, in fact he minimizes any impact which the second editor may have had, so that for all practical purposes the deuteronomistic history is, as Hoffmann also takes it, a unity. Gerbrandt is, however, too quickly dismissive of the problems involved in this view; in particular, in the present context, the differences between conditional and unconditional versions of the promise to David cannot be easily harmonized into a unified view of kingship, but more naturally reflect

Different views deriving from different historical backgrounds. It may indeed be possible, by simply treating the deuteronomistic history as a single literary unit, to construct a single view of kingship in the deuteronomistic history (corresponding quite closely to what is put forward here), but it is unlikely that this can be held to reflect a view consistently held by one or more deuteronomistic authors.

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A.D.H. Mayes

Klaus Westermann, Genesis 12-36. SPCK 1986. pp.604 £40

Given the complexity and variety of research and theory in oral tradition, literary criticism, the patriarchs, archaeological data, within the overall framework of an upheaval in general Pentateuchal criticism, the task of a commentator on Genesis is surely an impossible one. Westermann has done justice to the complexity and yet achieved the impossible: a clear and balanced guide through the welter of argument towards a fresh and eminently readable presentation. This volume, the middle one of a trilogy, translated from the Biblischer Kommentar series, covers the patriarchal traditions of Genesis, bounded on the one hand by the primeval history and on the other by the Joseph story (the volume on the former published by SPCK in 1984; that on the latter still to appear). Westermann takes pains to point out the links between these sections, yet their relative independence, which is on a different and later level from the independence of the constituent elements of each section, justifies their separation.

Westermann opens the present volume with a long introduction of over a hundred pages which, from the outset, reveals the sure touch of one who is thoroughly in command of the secondary literature and can use it effectively to bring to the fore the richness of the biblical text. Having quickly discussed the significance of the patriarchal story, a topic which in general underlies the whole and becomes explicit again at the end of the commentary, the author turns to the origin and growth of the tradition. Here,

arguing for a synthesis of literary-critical, form-critical and archaeological approaches, he takes care to avoid the extremes which characterize much contemporary study. These extremes are found with those who see the material purely as literature with the Yahwist as a real author (against whom it is insisted that the writers intended not only to speak to their contemporaries but also to pass on what they had received), and with those who argue for the historicity of the patriarchal stories often by appeal to the results of archaeology. Neither extreme takes adequate account of the variety of materials which form criticism has discovered in the patriarchal stories. In some places there is the creative work of the Yahwist, but in others "we can...be quite certain that one cannot contest the possibility that texts, narratives and motifs in Gen. 12-50 reach back into the patriarchal period". There are some assured results to which we may hold, and if these seem mainly to indicate the late age of much material, it is also to be noted that there are good indications, both positive and negative, of materials which may be traced back to the patriarchal times.

This is not to say, however, that history is to be derived from the patriarchal stories, for these, as Westermann shows in an important section, were originally oral traditions, and, as such, had concerns and purposes different from the historical and biographical. Basic to them is the community within which they were related and transmitted, and it is that community's link with the patriarchs which is the motive in their transmission. The patriarchal stories are narratives, which are not to be analyzed in terms of the information or message which they contain, but are to be understood for what they are: "their intention is to give the listener a share in situations and events of which that person knew nothing, but which it is important for him to hear and experience, because the narratives deal with the fathers." The primary function of the narratives is "to give each new generation a share in the experiences, both external and internal, of the events and dramas which the fathers themselves lived through".

The closer description of the patriarchal narratives is a matter of considerable importance, and Westermann gives a succinct description of the various possible types: aetiological tale, legend, myth, which, with usually less than adequate justification, have been seen as represented in Gen. 12-50.



the other hand, the hitherto common depreciation of ealogies and itineraries as secondary literary constructions is here balanced by reference to recent anthropological work which shows their function in the oral tradition of the community. The archaeological approach is then roughly discussed, and, in the context of a positive revaluation of its contribution, the need for its integration with the form-critical and tradition-historical approaches is emphasized.

Westermann's treatment is marked by a thoroughly informed and sober caution. While admitting the extreme difficulty in even referring to a "patriarchal period", he adds that study of the ancient world "has shown the possibility of patriarchal life and movement for the period before the Exodus and before the settlement of the tribes in Canaan". Moreover, using recent research in ethnology, biology and economic history, the life style of the patriarchs can be described in terms which do justice to the very complex form of relationship between non-settled and settled peoples. In addition, while the many proposed parallels between patriarchal customs and the laws of extrabiblical texts must be treated with considerable reserve - in any case they cannot be said to link the patriarchs with any particular time or place - it may at least be concluded from the parallels that the patriarchal stories reflect and derive from a pre-political family based society and thus ante-date the rise of Israel. Within this biblical setting the religion of the patriarchs is to be described, and here Westermann makes a definitive contribution to the debate: working from the family form of patriarchal society the form and content of patriarchal religion is positively delineated on foundations much firmer than those which Alt could provide.

This commentary is not only a comprehensive reflection of the current state of scholarship on numerous topics associated with Gen.12-36 and the patriarchs; it represents an important original study of these topics. Backed up by vast learning, supplied with most extensive bibliographies, and lucidly written (and here the significant contribution of the translator to overall treatment must be emphasized). it must be an enduring resource for future

research in this area.

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A.D.H. Mayes

Joseph F. Kelly: Why is there a New Testament?

G. Chapman, 200pp, 1980

This book, written by the Professor of NT and Early Christianity at John Carroll University offers a racy introduction to the NT for a non-specialist readership. Its origins are in the classroom, and the substance of the book will be of interest to A-level and undergraduate students as well as general readers. Its chief concern is to explore how the NT came into being as an entity in the life of the Church. Kelly notes the discomfort of many conservatives at any suggestion that it was the Church that formed the Canon, rather than the self-evident character of the writings themselves. In Kelly's view, however, the fact that it took two and a half centuries from the latest writings to the fixing of the Canon of the NT poses important questions that must be considered.

His main thesis is a familiar one, that the NT is the product of the communities from whom it was written, and amongst whom it found its eventual acceptance. The first part of the book surveys the various books themselves. After first discussing why it was Jesus left nothing in writing, Kelly develops his theme that the demands of mission produced the various writings. His views represent on the whole a consensus of modern scholarship. Thus he remains agnostic about the Pauline authorship of Ephesians, and follows Raymond Brown in seeing the Johannine writings as addressed to a community centred upon 'the beloved disciple.' Kelly next considers at length the formation of the Canon, tracing evidence for the emerging of the concept first within the later writings of the NT, and in the fathers, and the influence of heterodoxy in accelerating the process. He examines the twin criteria of apostolicity (in the sense of fidelity of apostolic teaching) and orthodoxy. The student

NT apocrypha surveys the range of these works, and the reasons for which they were written, and asserts their value for understanding the life and thought of early Jewish Christian and gnostic communities. The methods of textual criticism are explained, to enable the reader to understand the criteria scholars use to establish the authentic text. The wealth of manuscript evidence and the achievement of a reliable text are weighed against the provisional nature of textual study, with the possibility of further discoveries, and the constant improvement of scholarly methods. Kelly also surveys the earliest translations of the Bible, both Eastern and Western versions, assessing their value to textual critics, linguists and church historians. In a final chapter he develops his interest in early Christianity, and its evidence of the Spirituality of the early Christian communities.

This is an attractive book which offers an easy introduction to a wide range of topics. Its outcome however is descriptive rather than analytical. One feels that the argument is not rigorously sustained as the book progresses. Yet as a popular work it offers a useful resource for the hard-pressed student or busy teacher, as well as a helpful overview of the interaction of Church and Scripture in the early centuries.

A.W.G. Brown

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Robert E. Coleman (Ed): Evangelism on the Cutting Edge

Revell 156pp \$8.95

This is a book of essays in which ten respected American conservative evangelicals, all associated with Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, look at a number of major issues which, in their view, hinder the effective proclamation of the Gospel.

In the opening essay, Dr Kenneth Kantzner examines how the concept of "lostness" has been jettisoned both by liberal Protestantism, and also in recent Catholic theology, and has



been replaced by universalism, and a growing syncretism. These hallmarks of much current ecumenical theology have had devastating results for the missionary movement. Dr. A.P. Johnston's essay on Church Unity and the Mission of the Church is severely critical of the ecumenical movement, and also of recent developments in evangelical theology, and especially its emphasis upon the Kingdom and upon sociopolitical action as part of the mission of the Church. Perceptive essays by Dr Wm Taylor and Dr David Hesselgrave on Liberation Theology and contextualism, respectively, show how conservative evangelicals, faced with the problems of relating the gospel to different cultures have been forced to wrestle with the situations human beings actually face, and to relate the "givenness" of the gospel to them. Dr Timothy Warner's essays on encountering the demonic is a salutary reminder of the reality of "principalities and powers" as the ultimate enemy of the gospel. Dr Gary Collins, Psychologist and Counsellor, examines the influence of psychology on theology and especially how it has tended to weaken the concept of sin, maintaining instead that maturity, happiness and freedom from guilt-feelings are the fruits of our salvation, achieved through self-determination and self-fulfilment. He urges that the undoubted insights of psychology must be tested by biblical truth, and that when this has been taken in hand, then it will become a valuable resource for helping people. Other chapters cover the importance of the bible as the source of personal and rational renewal, the value of evangelistic preaching and the importance of discipling converts in other that they may become "disciples" of others. In the final essay, Dr Walter Kaiser pleads for a new emphasis upon evangelism at the heart of the seminary curriculum, and a greater emphasis upon the personal spiritual preparation and maturity of candidates for ministry as a needful balance against our current pre-occupation with academic excellence.

The book contains a number of interesting and valuable essays. My main hesitation is concerning to whom it is directed. It will not add much to the knowledge of those already interested in evangelism and mission. In tackling some of the major contemporary issues, it fails to explore them with sufficient perspective and depth. Yet it does

like a number of important points which are in danger of being forgotten. To that extent it is worthwhile reading for us all.

Lllyncastell

N. Antrim

A.W.G. Brown

Angel M. deS. Cameron

and Pamela F. Sims:

Abortion: The Crisis in Moral  
Medecine. IVP Press, 1986 np

It is quite appropriate that this book be reviewed in the Journal of Biblical Studies. The bible is best expounded in relation to crucial issues of human life and social developments. No contemporary issue could raise more arguments or arouse deeper emotional reactions than abortion. In the past twenty years, since the easing of restrictions by the Abortion Act for England and Wales in 1967, it is estimated that two million abortions have been procured legally in that area. Further, in an Irish journal we have a peculiar interest since it is known that some two thousand women "cross the water" annually from Northern Ireland to obtain what the local law forbids. Numbers cannot be determined for the Republic of Ireland, where, after bitter controversy, a referendum a year or two back, resulted in enshrining prohibition of abortion in the constitution of the country. It is estimated that numbers compare proportionately there. The current scenario of abortion law and practice in England and Wales is clearly and expertly described in the four chapters written by Pamela Sims, a practising gynaecologist. It is well to be brought up to date in an ever developing field in which ten years is a lifetime and where issues for decision-making become ever more demanding on professionals in medicine, counsellors and parents, or lone individuals hiding their pregnancy but requiring sound advice. We are all involved as citizens at whose expense provision may be made for such immense dimensions of medical and social care. As Christians, our responsible action needs to hold together both the actual situation in which decisions have to be made and the theological bases for

moral judgment. This book takes us, in its first two chapters, into consideration of what the Bible has to say and what the churches have always taught on these matters. These are by Nigel Cameron, the theologian in the joint authorship.

We are told straightaway that if we seek in the Bible a "statement" about whether or not abortion is right, or a "definition of the status of the unborn child", we shall be disappointed. The Bible story could not be expected to relate clearly to our post-scientific world. However, his treatment of the bible sources seems unnecessarily confined to texts dealing with the attitude to the pre-natal existence of the children such as Job, Jeremiah, the author of Ps 139 etc. Also we are shown how the gospel narrative of the

birth and genealogical precedents of Jesus and the Baptist assume continuity through "begetting" and inheritance of sacred history. In an appendix consideration is given to a disputed text of Exodus 21:22-25 dealing with the various penalties imposed on anyone causing miscarriage to an innocent pregnant bystander. Can the reader rightly expect more by way of treatment of the theological bases for moral decisions in this area? Cameron stresses the truth that human creation is "in the likeness of God." This has, of course, been variously interpreted. It may refer to the capacity to relate to God and to fellow-human beings. It may mean that we are able to reason. Others see it as lying in man's capacity to have dominion over the world and to use this power creatively and in trusting obedience to God as is revealed to us throughout scripture and not just in "statements" or "in clear principles" to be applied.

So it is not enough for the author to say the fetus from conception, being in the image of God, may never be aborted. The author tends to dismiss official statements by the churches of England and Scotland in the mid 1960s as reflecting liberal trends of society, putting too much weight on compassion and the freedom of the individual, and too little on biblical texts. It is a pity that only twenty-five pages are devoted to biblical exegesis and exposition out of a total of 160. We would need at least another chapter set out how, in a society infected and affected by human sin



and the accumulation of evil, clear interpreting of the will of God may not be easy, yet some kind of consensus regarding respect for the unborn child, compassion for distressed children of God, partnership of professional and pastoral and lay support may be sought and practised.

There is no doubt at all that objectivity is the aim of the authors. The "crisis in morals and medicine" calls for books like this one but requires a fuller treatment than its biblical section offers.

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James R. Boyd

Neal Flanagan, Friend Paul. Letters, Theology, Humanity

Geoffrey Chapman 1986 pp216

Some twenty or twenty-five years ago Neal Flanagan, an American, was a teacher of Holy Scripture in the Servite Priory in Benburb, N. Ireland. He was then a young priest, freshly graduated from the biblical schools. It comes as a shock to learn that he died in 1985, having then been for thirteen years Professor of NT Studies at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley.

The book here under review is a fitting memorial to him. Though professedly popular, it is a superb introduction to the letters and mind of St. Paul. It is brief and pithy, yet marvellously full of information; it is "fresh" in style but never cheap; it is balanced in its criticism, never biased, eminently sensible and a model of pedagogy. After a preliminary introduction on such questions as style, form, categories, dates, liturgical usage, manner and process of writing, relationship to the gospels (and to Jesus), theological and historical importance, controversial and other issues, he proceeds to deal with the letters themselves in three stages, and in three different sections: first, an 'overview' of each letter; then a more extended view of each letter; and finally a discussion of the theology and special problems of each letter. This progress-

ive introduction, with little or no repetition, ought to prove invaluable as a teaching method. Each chapter is followed by a list of recommended readings with useful (and often delightful) comments by the author. For instance, his first three recommendations on Romans are as follows (p.163)

K. Barth...is justly famous as a pre-World War II manifesto of Pauline theology. In a German world invaded by profound evil, Barth's commentary takes its stand on God's side

E. Best, (The letter....) "is directed successfully to an audience without 'specialized theological knowledge, and no knowledge of Greek and Hebrew'. Best does fine work

C.H. Dodd (The epistle....) is a relatively brief but profound study of this epistles, presented with great simplicity. It is a pleasure to read.

A few samples of his method and style:

Speaking of one of the characteristic features of 1 Thess. he writes: "This letter introduces us to three Pauline triads, the first two of which soon become, or are already, common elements within Christianity: faith, hope and love (1.3;5.8); God Father, Lord Jesus, and Spirit (1:3-5 etc); spirit, soul and body (5.25). The final linking only occurs here in the Pauline literature. Paul alludes in reverse order to the human body, the living (ensouled) human body, the living body in Christ (enspirited)." (p48)

He shows a rather more than ordinate interest in the "Woman's Veil" of 1 Cor.11.2-16, which he regards as "timely rather than timeless", while acknowledging that it may not be a 'veil' at all (p62); and he gives three reasons for his view that 1 Cor.14.33b-36 (on women in church) is an interpolation into Paul's letter. He writes (p80): "For these reasons an increasing number of scholars (listed) are convinced that we have here an interpolation which betrays the equal status doctrine of Paul evidenced in Gal 3.28 and indirectly in his lavish praise of women co-workers in Rom 16.1-15. Did they co-work in silence? Did Priscilla teach Apollos by hand signals? (Acts 18.26)".

Concerning the oldest papyrus codex, P46, he writes:

"Of this we possess today 86 nearly perfect leaves of an original of some 104. Originally the codex included ten letters (incl. the letter to the Hebrews), all letters to the churches. It is almost certain that Philemon and the Pastorals were not part of the codex. Thirty of the leaves are now in the possession of the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor; the rest are in London. (Here, of course, he makes a mistake, for the papyri are in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin.)

The book originated out of the author's lectures to students. All students of divinity will find it an invaluable aid and a delight to read.

All Hallows College  
Dublin

Kevin Condon

F.X. Durwell: Holy Spirit of God, an essay in biblical theology. Trans. by Sister Benedict Davies, OSU. Geoffrey Chapman 1986  
viii plus 184 pp including notes.

The publisher advertizes the book as "an essay in biblical theology and a stimulus to spiritual reflection." One might acknowledge the latter part of the description, but one will have grave reservations about the first part. The author himself writes that the reading - and presumably the understanding of the scriptures is subject to rules. "To the rules of grammar and logic and the others....we have to add another: the rule of the Holy Spirit. He is the law of life of the Church; he is also the law of reading the scriptures... Inspired by the Spirit, the book is not understood at depth except by inspired readers." (p90)

His book bears all the signs of this inspired understanding. It presents an exalted vision of the meaning, the role, the power and the relevance of the Holy Spirit in a style that is almost pure didactic, often repetitive, and more high-flown than inspiring. He touches upon all texts in the bible which refer to the Spirit - and many also from the Fathers - but without discrimination as to



background, situation, purpose, or even period in time. He proclaims the meaning of countless texts, but never expound them. One gets the impression that the book had its origin in spiritual conferences which were then compiled and edited to form a "theology" of the Spirit. The prayerful reader will doubtless find much in the book that is inspirational and helpful; the theology student will scarcely have his teeth sharpened by its exposition of the scripture.

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